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The Lincoln Funeral Train.

 CONTRIBUTED BY J. W. BECKER.

Each recurring year there is added interest in Lincoln stories and Lincoln history. The approaching centennial has intensified this interest, and no doubt in 1918 many stories about the great American hitherto unpublished will find their way into print. It occurred to the writer that a description of the Lincoln funeral train from Chicago to Springfield might be of historic value at this time.

William S. Porter, a veteran of the Civil War, who enlisted when but a boy, resides at Jerseyville. After his honorable discharge from the service Mr. Porter became a brakeman on the Chicago & Alton Railroad, and in that capacity served as one of the special brakemen on the Lincoln funeral train.

On Monday, February 12, 1917, Lincoln's birthday, Mr. Porter gave the writer the following interesting account of that memorable funeral procession. J. W. BECKER.

ACCOUNT OF TRIP FROM CHICAGO TO SPRINGFIELD OF TRAIN BEARING REMAINS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, BY WILLIAM S. PORTER.

"In the spring of 1864 I enlisted in the One Hundred and Forty-fifth Illinois Infantry (under the 100-day call), and was mustered out in the fall of the same year (1864). In a few days after I was mustered out I got employment on the Chicago & Alton Railroad as a brakeman. It was a very dangerous occupation, and men to fill the positions were hard to get, as one had to be out on top of the train nearly all the time that it was in motion; no modern appliances being in vogue at that time, such as air brakes, self-couplers and other safety devices that make railroading almost a pleasure in these days. Right here let me mention the fact that at that time George M. Pullman, who, with his brother, were working in the car building department of the Chicago & Alton shops at Bloomington, Illinois, one as general foreman, the

other as assistant, were formulating and working on plans to build and equip the first sleeping and parlor car that was ever made—the birth of the system which is now almost universal throughout the world wherever railroads are operated.

O. Vaughan, who was assistant superintendent of the Chicago & Alton at that time, with headquarters at Bloomington, summoned about a dozen or more brakemen to report at his office for instructions on special service. The instructions were to get ready and go to Chicago and come out on Lincoln's funeral train, which was to leave Washington, D. C., on April 21, 1865, arriving in Chicago May 1, the body lying in state at the court house until 6 o'clock p. m. May 2, when the train left Chicago for Springfield, Illinois, the terminus of the trip.

J. C. McMullen, assistant superintendent of the Chicago division (afterwards general manager of the entire Chicago & Alton system), had charge of the train, but George Hewitt, an old passenger man, was assigned the position of conductor, from whom the brakemen received their orders direct. I can only recall the names of four or five of my associates as brakemen on that memorable train, and I do not know whatever became of them, except Isaac Evans, who was killed in a round house in East St. Louis during a cyclone which demolished that city in 1871. The other names that I can recall at this time are Peter Dunbar, Theo. Bellows, Robert Barr and Patrick Nevins. As I have not been in the railroad business for about twenty-five years, I have completely lost track of all of them.

As I remember the funeral train, it consisted of one baggage car, several ordinary coaches and the catafalque car, which was the second car from the rear end of the train. The cars were of the type used at that period and belonged to the Baltimore & Ohio and Pennsylvania Central Railroads, and came through as a solid train from Washington to Springfield. The catafalque car, carrying the corpse of the President, was especially arranged for that purpose. The seats were removed and in the center of the car a structure was built in the shape of a pyramid. Upon the top of this pyramid, which had a railing surrounding it, the casket was placed. By this arrangement, those wishing to view the remains would come up to the foot of the casket in couples

and then separate and pass by in single file on either side and go out of the car in the same order. The next and last car in the train was occupied by members of the family of the President and the higher officials of the government, both civil and military, principally among whom I recall Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, and Major General Ulysses S. Grant.

A crack New York city regiment of soldiers (their title or name forgotten) escorted the body and performed guard duty over the entire trip. The guards on duty were placed in this manner: Four guards were posted in each car, two at each end. The moment the train stopped the guards came out of the car and took the positions assigned to them at the foot of the car steps on both sides of the train. No one was allowed to board the train without a permit. When the signal to proceed was given the engineer gave two short blasts on the whistle, then the guards would mount the steps and stand there until the train got under way, then go inside and sit down.

The head officials of the Chicago & Alton railroad took extra precautions for the safety of the train over their line. All the bridges (mostly wooden at that time) were guarded against fire or otherwise by a watchman, who carried red and white signals for both day and night. The switch rails at all the obscure sidings were securely spiked down, etc., and all the regular trains were ordered to take the siding one hour before the scheduled time of the funeral train and remain there until it passed by.

Two locomotives were assigned to pull the train from Chicago to its final destination, Springfield, Illinois; one to draw the train proper and the other to act as a "pilot," running about four or five minutes ahead of the second section or main train between the principal stations, also assisting the other engine on all steep grades by being coupled together.

The two locomotives selected for this honor were No. 40 and No. 57. Both engines were of the same type and size (16 by 22-inch cylinder), built by the Walter McQueen locomotive works at Schenectady, New York. They were "wood burners," with an old fashioned balloon smoke-stack, Russia

iron jackets, brass dome, brass sand box, brass bell frame, six-inch brass bands encircling the boiler about four feet apart for its entire length, brass hand railings along the running boards on both sides of the engine, and all highly polished.

Engine No. 40, with Henry ("Hank") Russell in charge as engineer, was decorated from the "cowcatcher" to the rear draw-bar with flags intertwined with crepe and bunting and other symbols of mourning. On the front of the engine and directly under the headlight was placed a crayon portrait bust of Mr. Lincoln in a circular frame, or wreath of flowers, about five feet in diameter.

Engine No. 57, with James ("Jim") Cotton at the throttle, was decorated in about the same manner as the "pilot" engine.

On the evening of May 2 the two locomotives and train were backed into the Union Station, ready to take the road on their way to Springfield, Illinois, the final destination. The funeral cortege left the court house in Chicago about 6 o'clock p. m. and came west on Madison Street. The hearse was drawn by eight large, coal black stallions. Each horse was accompanied by a groom, who walked alongside with his hand on the bridle bit. The grooms were all negroes, large and fine looking, and were all uniformed alike. They made an impressive appearance.

The train left Chicago about 7:30 or 8 o'clock p. m. and proceeded on its journey. At all the larger places, like Joliet, Wilmington, Bloomington and Lincoln, there were large crowds of people congregated—stern, grim visaged men, tear bedimmed women and children—all silent, but with an anxious, expectant look, as of some impending disaster. It was that way all along the line. There were throngs of people at all the smaller towns, also at the country road crossings could be seen a group of people waiting to see the arrival and passage of this train, the remembrance of which was to become an epoch in their lives.

The train arrived in Springfield about noon the next day, May 3. A great concourse of people were gathered together in that city on this sad occasion. When the "pilot" engine

arrived on the outskirts of the city it stopped and awaited the arrival of the second section, then coupled in with it and proceeded to enter the city. It took over two hours to go about a mile and a half. It was certainly the people's funeral."